

Elk County

Elk County was created on April 18, 1843, from parts of Jefferson, Clearfield, and McKean Counties and named for the elk that roamed the county. Ridgway, the county seat, was laid out in 1833 and named for Jacob Ridgway, a local landowner. It was incorporated as a borough on February 15, 1881.

Land speculation companies owned this area after it was acquired by Pennsylvania at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix of 1784—the “Last Purchase.” In 1825, a Smethport to Milesburg Turnpike was incorporated, and a sawmill opened in Ridgway the next year. Lumber was the basis of the early economy, logs being floated to cities by the natural waterways. Railroads began to appear in 1864, and by 1890 the county produced coal and oil. Today, powdered metal, paper, and carbon are produced. Elk is one of the four counties that have large areas lying within the Allegheny National Forest. The farming area is only 3½ percent of the county. Although the indigenous elk population was hunted to extinction, a herd introduced from strains found in the western states now flourishes. Elk was the first county to have land designated for state game. The original settlers were from upper New York State and New England. Northern European immigrants then appeared, and around 1900 immigrants from southern and eastern Europe arrived.

ELK COUNTY - 7th Class

Formed on April 18, 1843 from parts of Jefferson, Clearfield and
McKean Counties

Boroughs

<u>Name of Borough</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Town Laid Out or Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Johnsonburg	Jan. 29, 1892	1889	Ridgway Township
Ridgway	Feb. 15, 1881	S 1822	Ridgway Township
St. Marys	Mar. 3, 1848	1842	

Second Class Townships

<u>Name of Township</u>	<u>Incorporated</u>	<u>Settled</u>	<u>Incorporated From</u>
Benezett	Before 1843		
Benzinger	Before 1843	1842	
Fox	Feb. 27, 1814	1811	Incorporated as a township while part of Elk County
Highland	Apr. 8, 1850		Ridgway Township
Horton	Apr. 8, 1850	1818	Fox Township
Jay	Before 1843	About 1815	
Jones	Before 1843		
Millstone	Mar. 9, 1870	1826	Spring Creek Township
Ridgway	1833	About 1825	
Spring Creek	Before 1843	1831-1832	

Frederic A. Godcharles, Pennsylvania, Political, Governmental, Military and Civil:
Political and Civil History Volume (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1933).

History of the Counties of McKean, Elk, Cameron and Potter, Pennsylvania with
Biographical Selections, (Chicago: J. H. Beers and Company, 1890).